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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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December 13, 1973

Colonel James S. Haught, USAF
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22332

Dear Colonel Haught:

Further reference is made to your letter of September 6, 1973, in effect appealing the settlement of our Transportation and Claims Division dated August 21, 1973, which disallowed your claim for reimbursement of the \$390.20 cost of your commercial air transportation from Karachi, Pakistan, to Frankfurt, Germany, incident to your circuitous travel from Saigon, Vietnam, to the United States in July 1971.

You state that you were authorized circuitous travel on your permanent change of station from Vietnam to the Pentagon, with space required travel from Bangkok, Thailand, to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. However you say you were "bumped" from the flight at Karachi, Pakistan, and not allowed to continued to Dhahran on a space required basis with the result that you were forced to obtain commercial air transportation from Karachi to Frankfurt. It is your contention that you were entitled to space required Government air travel to Dhahran and as such would have been able to continue the flight to Torrejon, Spain, by Government transportation and then to your new station.

Your travel vouchers show that you traveled from Saigon, Vietnam, to Bangkok, Thailand, to New Delhi, India, and from there to Karachi, Pakistan, by Government transportation. From Karachi to Frankfurt, Germany, you used commercial air transportation at personal expense. From Frankfurt to McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, you were again furnished Government transportation. You then traveled by private automobile to Washington, D.C.

The record indicates that by Special Orders Number 121, Headquarters United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, dated May 1, 1971, you were relieved from assignment to Detachment 11, APO San Francisco 96222, 1131 USAF Special Activity Squadron and assigned to Detachment QCAI, Headquarters United States Air Force, the Pentagon. The above order was amended by Special Orders

[Reimbursement of Travel Costs]

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Number 168, same headquarters, dated June 17, 1971, by which you were authorized circuitous travel to your new station via Thailand; New Delhi, India; Karachi, Pakistan; Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; and Spain.

You submitted a Military Airlift Command Transportation Authorization (MTA) issued on June 29, 1971, which indicates that you were authorized transportation from Bangkok, Thailand, to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on Flight No. 561. Authority for the travel was given as Special Orders Number 121.

Under the provisions of 37 U.S.C. 404 and the Joint Travel Regulations promulgated thereunder, the Government's obligation upon permanent change of station is limited to furnishing transportation to a military member from his old to his new duty station via the direct or shortest usually traveled route, or to reimbursement therefor computed on that basis. When travel is performed by a route other than the direct route, a member is entitled to such travel at Government expense only to the extent that it does not exceed the costs that would have been necessarily incurred for travel by the direct route to his new duty station. 47 Comp. Gen. 440 (1968).

Air Force Manual 75-8, paragraph 8-14, in effect at the time of your travel, states that the policy of the Air Force on circuitous travel is that personnel returning to the United States may be provided space required transportation via a circuitous route provided the total cost over such routing does not exceed the charges the Air Force would have been required to pay if the travel had been performed via the routes and modes prescribed in attachment 1 (the normal routing). When the cost of the complete travel over the circuitous route exceeds the cost via the direct route, space required travel may be provided only from the point on the circuitous route at which the cost is not in excess of the direct route. Attachment 1 in effect at the time of your travel provides that Travis Air Force Base would be the point of debarkation from Saigon, Vietnam.

Section III of an information brochure published by Headquarters United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, entitled "Circuitous Routing Via Embassy Flight 561", which you have indicated was in effect at the time of your travel, states:

"a. Space required transportation is authorized from Saigon to a point enroute for which the cost of

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transportation would be equal to that for the normal route from Saigon to Travis AFB. This point is normally Karachi, Pakistan. Space available transportation is then authorized to a European port of embarkation (Rota, Spain; Torrejon, Spain; Rhein Main, Germany; Mildenhall, England; or Prestwick, England) and space required transportation is authorized from one of these points to CONUS.

"b. Space available transportation via military airlift command or theater aircraft is authorized for any portion of travel which is not space required. All travel time in excess of constructive travel time is chargeable as leave. The normal direct route of travel to CONUS is from Saigon to Travis AFB and the authorized travel time is one day. Consequently, one day of travel is authorized for circuitous routing.

"c. The availability of space available travel from Karachi, Pakistan to a European port of embarkation varies. Sufficient funds must be available to defray the cost of commercial travel. The cost of a commercial airline ticket from Karachi, Pakistan to Frankfurt, Germany is approximately \$375.00."

It would thus appear that you were properly in a space required status only to Karachi, Pakistan, and that your status from thereon was on a space available basis. As such you were subject to being "bumped" from the flight by space required passengers and it appears that this is what occurred. Thus, as indicated by the brochure, and in accordance with applicable regulations, you received all the (space required) Government transportation to which you were entitled at Government expense when you were transported to Karachi.

You point out that your MTA reflected travel from Bangkok, Thailand, to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia and not from Saigon to Dhahran. You also state that you made your own way to Bangkok which your MTA designated as your port of embarkation. Travel vouchers dated August 17, 1971, and May 11, 1972, both signed by you, show that you traveled from Saigon to Bangkok by Government plane. Thus you were in fact furnished Government transportation from Saigon to

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Karachi. Also, your orders indicate that you would depart from Vietnam and travel via Thailand. Consequently it appears that, in fact, your port of embarkation was Saigon and not Bangkok, and, therefore, you were entitled to space required transportation to Karachi, and not to Dhahran.

Accordingly, since you were furnished all the Government transportation to which you were entitled under the regulations and in accordance with the above quoted brochure, incident to your permanent change of station from Vietnam to the United States, the prior disallowance of your claim is sustained.

Sincerely yours,

Paul G. Dambling

For the Comptroller General
of the United States

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